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CHRYSANTHEMUMS

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CHRYSANTHEMUM

BY

N. HUDSON MOORE

Author of "The Old China Book," "The Old Furniture Book," "The Lace Book," etc.

WITH DECORATIONS BY

FREDERICK G. HALL

AND

Illustrations from Photographs of Flowers

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"I HAD wandered far through many lands; had listened to the tinkling music of the samisen and the voices of women singing. I had climbed high mountains, seen strange gods in the temples; had rested 'neath flowery trees in the heat of the long summer days, and had scattered money with a free hand.

"Suddenly, in a far country, my thoughts turned to home, to my wife, to my children so long unseen, to my garden blossoming and fair. I set my face toward home; I travelled long. Soon now shall I see my beloved. Lightly, lightly, speeds my boat along, my garments fluttering to the gentle breeze. The rice-fields are growing

brown, for winter is not far off. From afar I descry my old home and joyfully press onward in my haste.

"Alas! as I come nearer I see the ruin time has wrought in my home; see my faithful servants, grown old and grey, rush forth to meet me; my children, lean and ragged, cluster at the gate. Sad though all things look, there is the old pine tree and my chrysanthemums laden with blossoms of gold."

Thus wrote T'ao Yüan-Ming, who lived from 365 to 427 and became one of the most learned and noted of all the Chinese writers.

From China the chrysanthemum was introduced into Japan, and thence all over the world, but one will look in vain in old "Herballs," for them under this name. The first of these flowers to bloom in European gardens, over two hundred years ago, were called by the long name of *Matricaria*

japonica maxima, and they are spoken of as bearing large flowers, white, yellow, blush, purple, and crimson in colour. They were rechristened, and as by far the greater number showed yellow blossoms, the name chrysanthemum was given, "golden flower" from the Greek words *chrysos*, gold, and *anthos*, flower.

Breynuis, a famous old botanist, tells how these flowers were brought from Japan to Holland in 1689, and how skilful and patient men worked over them for many years, changing them from their single form to double, button, pompon, and other varieties. Reede, an English gardener, writes about having some as early as 1699, and Linnaeus mentions them in 1753, by which time they were no longer scarce.

Who would imagine that the huge, thousand-leaved ball, which is the present form of the flower, belongs to

the same family as the modest daisy and the humble feverfew? Yet it does, and began life by having a great golden eye, and a single rim of petals around the edge. By the persistence of man the minute golden flowers in the centre have been endowed with corollas like those on the outer edge, and the present chrysanthemum no longer recognises her humble extraction; she is like a proud sister in silks and feathers, who overlooks poor Cinderella sitting with her feet in the ashes.

The botanical name of our common field daisy, or whiteweed, is *Chrysanthemum Leucanthemum*, but its homely or common name changes its form with the locality in which it is found, and may be daysie, daysy, daysey, dayseye, or even daieseyghe.

Chaucer speaks of it,—

"The dayseye or elles the eye of day,
The emperice and flour of floures alle."

Philadelphia

Shakespeare mentions it many times over, and when in its progress round the globe it reaches Scotland, its name changes entirely and it becomes gowan.

Milton, who uses his knowledge of flowers so constantly, has in "Comus" this passage: —

> "The sounds and seas, with all their funny drove,
> Now to the moon in wavering morrice move;
> And on the tawny sands and shelves
> Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.
> By dimpled brook, and fountain brim,
> The wood-nymphs deck'd with daisies trim,
> Their merry wakes and pastimes keep."

Burns has it, in "Auld Lang Syne,"

> "We twa hae run about the braes,
> An' pu'd the gowans fine."

In "Guy Mannering" Scott speaks of these little flowers also, —

"They [the sheets] were washed with the fairy-well water, and bleached on the bonnie white gowans, and beetled by Nelly and hersell."

There is a curious phrase, which almost comes under the head of slang,

connected with this lowly flower. A horse that in trotting lifts its feet but slightly from the ground is known as a "daisy-cutter," and the modern user of the phrase points with pride to the eminent authority he quotes.

In "Rob Roy" you will find this horse-law duly set down: "The trot is the true pace for the hackney; and were we near a town, I should like to try that daisy-cutter of yours upon a level piece of road."

In America the variety of local names bestowed upon the daisy is absolutely bewildering. Oxeye we all are familiar with, but there is also bull's-eye and dog's-eye, summer-, moon-, and horse-daisy, goldeneye, and in some places where it is too abundant for the wishes of the farmer, devil's-eye.

In all countries young maids, and their swains as well, have told their

fortunes by means of this simple flower, the French demoiselle as well as her cousin across the Rhine having their own particular rhymes.

Lowell's pretty lines, "With a Pressed Flower," tell the story.

"This little blossom from afar
Hath come from other hands to thine;
For, once, its white and drooping star
Could see its shadow in the Rhine.

"Perchance some fair-haired German maid
Hath plucked one from the selfsame stalk,
And numbered over, half afraid,
Its petals in her evening walk.

"'He loves me, loves me not,' she cries;
'He loves me more than earth or heaven!'
And then glad tears have filled her eyes
To find the number was uneven.

"And thou must count its petals well,
Because it is a gift from me;
And the last one of all shall tell
Something I've often told to thee.

"But here at home, where we were born,
Thou wilt find blossoms just as true,
Down-bending every summer morn
With freshness of New England dew.

"For Nature, ever kind to love,
Hath granted them the same sweet tongue,
Whether with German skies above,
Or here our granite rocks among."

Its relative, the feverfew, is botanically *Chrysanthemum Parthenium*, and was originally a European species which has become naturalised in this country. Its first use was for medicinal purposes, and it made a terribly bitter tea, which was liberally bestowed upon persons suffering from fevers.

The camomile, which looks much like small daisies, is another of these plants, which, travelling from Europe by devious ways, has become a settled resident here, as well as in Asia, Africa, and Australia.

It is the garden camomile which furnishes the aromatic flowers that were so frequently used for a blood purifier and tonic, in those days when our grandmothers devoted a portion of each garden patch for medicines and simples.

It was as a valuable adjunct to the medicine garden that the chrysanthe-

William H. Lincoln

mum flowers first were brought out of the Orient, and it was not till attention had been attracted to their rare and decorative beauty that the plant was rechristened and grown for ornament. A Chinese writer calls it "the flower of retirement and culture." After commerce with China had been firmly established, many seeds and cuttings were brought from there by merchant sailors for their women folk at home, much as bulbs had been carried from Holland. France first took great pains in raising seedlings and growing flowers with incurved petals — what is called now the Chinese type of flower. For greater popularity, however, we must look to the Japanese varieties, so odd and bizarre in shape, some ragged with petals curved and twisted in every direction, and some with but two rows of petals fringing the golden eye.

Second only to the rose in the amount which has been written about it, the chrysanthemum is a flower to wonder at and admire, but not to love. American florists, never weary of assisting Nature, are trying to impart fragrance to this flower, which would still more increase its popularity. The market reports for last year show that more than five hundred thousand dollars' worth were sold.

In the East the chrysanthemum is a national emblem, receiving almost reverential care and attention. Each year, in November, in the large cities in Japan thousands of plants are sold. Many of them have but a single stalk, with an immense flower ten or twelve inches across, on its top. The *Kiku-no-sekku* or Chrysanthemum Show, held in the city of Tokyo, is of the greatest beauty, and there are features of it quite peculiar to Japan. Besides the wonder-

ful potted flowers of endless colours and shapes, there are numerous scenes, historical and mythological, which are constructed entirely of these plants in full blossom. The hands, feet, and heads of the figures are of papier-maché, and, being delicately painted, are very lifelike. But the draperies, mountains, waterfalls, and animals are made entirely of these flowers woven into solid masses. There are such designs as a goddess rising from the sea, a white elephant with a gaily dressed lady on his back, and some artist-florists will even go so far as to depict Bandai-San in a state of violent eruption. These pictures are put in sheds covered with matting, and one may see occasionally the florist repairing the garment or some part of one of the figures. They are made on bamboo frames, and into this frame are set whole plants in flower, their roots

carefully packed in moss. The flowers and leaves are then woven into the desired shape by dexterous fingers, the floral pictures kept in the shade and abundantly watered, and the plants go on growing happily, far differently from our flowers at exhibitions, which are snipped off so that they wither and die in a few hours.

During the festivals the flower markets are open in the evening, and at that time the majority of the buyers are the working people, who have no costly vases at home, but who do not lack a bit of bamboo-cane in which to place a twig or flower and contemplate its beauty.

The arrangement of flowers in Japan is not haphazard or left to chance, but everything about it is arranged by laws. There are certain flowers which are used for fête days only; certain others which are abso-

Glory of the Pacific

lutely prohibited. There are several styles of arrangement, each style having a name, and this is a regularly taught branch of learning. Vases in which to put the flowers or twigs are of infinite variety, and harmony between the vase and the flower is one of the first conditions to be observed. There is a flower for each month, and for each circumstance, happy or otherwise. Special bouquets are arranged for birthdays, deaths, for the first day of the eighth month, and for the hundred and one little ceremonies which are an integral part of Japanese life and for which it would be a serious mistake to use the wrong flower.

"In the Islands of Japan
The Kiku opens like a fan.
A thousand petals set with art,
Where once she had a golden heart.

"In Spring the cherry-petals shower,
In May wistaria clothes each bower,
Gorgeous peonies, lilacs rosy,—
Every season has its posy.

"The iris blues the land in June
When suzumuchis are in tune.
In each pondlet lotus blows,
Filling pools with fragrant snows.

"November skies are dull and grey.
'T is then the Kiku holds her sway.
Perfect, golden, pink or rose,
Almost every shade that grows,
May be gathered in Japan,
Flowery land of Kiku-San."

The place which a bouquet should occupy in a room is also important, and it is usually put before the *kakemono,* or painting which ornaments every well-furnished room in a Japanese house. There should always be harmony between the picture and the bouquet. Thus, before every painting by the famous artist To-em-mei, who loved chrysanthemums, should be placed a vase of these flowers. Neither is it good taste to stand too near a vase of flowers. Three feet is a respectful distance from which to admire it. Approbation should be expressed in a low voice, simply and

quietly, the colour of the flowers being first touched upon, and different expressions being suited to different tints.

We do not usually regard Japan as a country of vivid colouring, yet during the end of September the tender green of the rice-fields changes into brown, the jay flies shrieking through the woods and among the old pines, and the mountain forests clothe themselves in colours which are even more brilliant than the livery of scarlet and gold of our forest trees. At this season comes the *kiku* in all its glory.

England had her "Wars of the Roses," which were waged only between rival houses, whereas Japan has had her "Wars of the Chrysanthemums" between rival dynasties. These wars lasted longer and were more bitterly contested than those in Britain; for fifty-six years, from 1336 to 1392, when the members of the

Southern Dynasty became the true Mikados, the Northern Dynasty, or "false" Mikados, were at war with them. The latter finally became extinct.

One may see readily why the imperial emblem of Japan is a chrysanthemum. It is a white one, of sixteen petals on a crimson ground, and it is much in evidence on that November day when the gates of the Akasaka Palace are thrown open and the people invited in to see the beautiful show of *kiku* flowers.

We have a saying which runs, "Every dog has his day." The Oriental way of expressing the same idea is far more flowery and no less expressive. They put it thus: "In the second month the peach tree blooms, but not till the ninth the chrysanthemum. So each must wait till his own turn comes."

Kioto

There is but one spot, as far as legends tell us, where it is not deemed lucky to cultivate chrysanthemums, and that is the pretty little city called Himeji, in the province of Harima. In the city of Himeji are the ruins of a castle with thirty turrets, which belonged to a rich nobleman. In the grounds of the castle was the house of one of the nobleman's retainers, who had a serving maid named O-kiku, the word *kiku* meaning chrysanthemum flower. Her duty was to take care of the many precious things in the house,— rare bronzes, images of beaten brass set with jewels, the household shrines, and all that was costly and fine. Among the many beautiful things were ten splendid dishes of gold which it was her duty to keep bright. One of these dishes was suddenly missed. Even after long search it could not be found, and the girl, knowing she would be held re-

sponsible, and finding it impossible to prove her innocence, drowned herself in a well. From this time forth her ghost returned nightly and could be heard counting the dishes slowly, with sobs, beginning — one — two — three, and so on up to nine. Then would come a cry of agony, a loud burst of weeping, and again the girl's voice counting — one — two, until nine was reached again. This she did every night until dawn came, and so, on account of poor O-kiku's fate, no one plants her name-flower in Himeji.

Not alone in the land of its birth is the chrysanthemum admired and extolled. Nowhere is it grown more successfully than in London, great city of smoke and gloom as it is. Should you chance to stroll into the Temple Gardens in November, you might almost fancy yourself transported across seas to Japan itself.

The gardens of the Temple and Inner Temple are a mass of these regal flowers. They are arranged in beds and borders, thousands and thousands of them, showing every variety and colour, and massed to display them to the best advantage. No invitation or permit is necessary, and the whole world of London may visit and enjoy them; and it does. During the cold nights the flowers are protected by muslin curtains drawn over them.

These exhibitions have been held since 1850, each year in November. At the first show about five hundred varieties were exhibited, and it was considered a marvellous number. Last year there were over two thousand, and each year sees anywhere from a dozen to twenty new varieties.

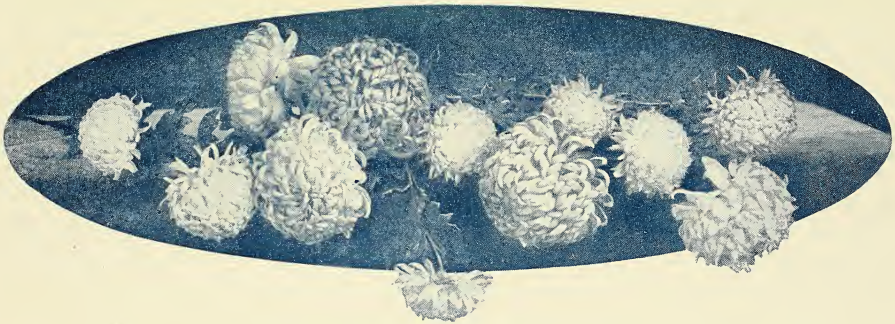
The Lord Mayor's show, held on November 10 in London, is one of the great events of the year, and there is

always to be found in it a floral car made of superb chrysanthemums, which is always greeted with murmurs of approbation as it passes along.

Perhaps the most endearing quality of the chrysanthemum is its willingness to grow. It does not demand country air and sunshine, but will blossom with almost equal beauty in the city, provided a modicum of care is bestowed upon it and soil suitable to its taste be furnished it.

In rural England the button or pompon chrysanthemum is a great favourite, and has many pet names attached to it. In Somerset grows a small variety of this flower, commonly called winter daisy, while some of larger size, which bloom late, are known as winter roses.

The yellow corn-marigold, which is native to England, is called botanically *Chrysanthemum segetum*, and grows



Ivory and Maud Dean

as freely in the cornfields as the scarlet poppy. The buds of this plant are gathered by the old wife and made into a decoction so bitter that it must be a sufferer indeed who is willing to gulp it down. The corn-marigold was one of those plants which always found a place in my lady's still-room, where she compounded flavours for cooking, perfumes and washes for the toilet, and medicines for the family, the receipts for which were handed down from one generation to another.

In the Black Forest, Germany, every family, however poor, strives to grow a plant of white chrysanthemums, in memory of that Christmas Eve so long ago when the Christ Child came to the cottage of a peasant asking for shelter and food. The family was very poor, the legend runs; the father worked hard to get enough food to fill the many little mouths, and keep

the cottage warm and shoes on all the feet. The night before Christmas the meal was hardly any better than on any other night, and it was scanty enough, yet each child gave to the little guest a part of its own portion, and was pleased to see him eat it with satisfaction. When the meal was ended the Christ Child rose, his poor garments became white, and a halo glowed about his head.

With a sweet and loving smile he thanked them all, then vanished like a vision. The children cried, "It was the holy Christ Child," and peace and contentment were over that cottage all the night. The next morning, Christmas Day, when they opened the door they found blossoming beside the doorstone beautiful white flowers with dark-green leaves. The father plucked some and carried them within doors, where they were faith-

fully tended, and these flowers which grew upon the spot where the holy Child stood are the snow-white chrysanthemums we know so well.

The name chrysanthemum will have to be changed again, since other colours than yellow have grown to be popular. Indeed, in England red and pink are more highly esteemed than the gold. The question, "What's in a name?" could never be applied to this flower, for the whole world seems to have been ransacked for fanciful titles for different varieties.

There is the "Fair Maid of Guernsey," Canary Bird, Ebornella, Elaine, Good Gracious (an American variety), Georges Sand, Black Hawk, Mutual Friend, Oriental Glory, Le Grand Dragon, Queen Alexandra, Rosy Morn, Market Pink, Godfrey's Pet, and a thousand more. These names would have pleased Ruskin, who invented

names to suit himself, and always fancied some term that indicated the colour.

The old-fashioned name which was bestowed on those first chrysanthemums which bloomed in American gardens (about 1820) was Artemesia, dedicated to the Greek Diana, Artemis — a very pretty name for the pale and rather dull lavender blooms which came out courageously late in the year, when most other flowers had succumbed to the nippings of the frost.

Sitting before a cheerful fire in one of those fine old houses which dignify many a village street in New England, the talk turned upon the generally inappropriate way in which floral names were bestowed upon girls. Lily is borne by many a brilliant brunette, and Violet by one whose last thought is of shrinking, and so on through the whole list.

Ivory

At last the eldest of the group spoke, and in a musing tone, as if indeed she looked back over the years which had long since fled, told this tale: —

"I never knew," said she, "but one person who bore the name of a flower to whom it seemed a part of herself. I was but a young girl myself when I first came to know Miss Artemesia, who lived in that great white house with Corinthian columns that stands on the farther side of the street.

"She was an only child, and as she came late in the married life of her parents, they named her for the new flower which had but recently bloomed in the garden, and which, blooming late in the year, reminded them of their little daughter.

"The little Artemesia grew and flourished, playing around the stately garden on sunny days, and though she escaped many of childhood's ills,

she had but a frail prettiness, not unlike her namesake flower. The years passed slowly, unfretted by the hurry and bustle which affects those in the outer world, and first her mother, and then her father, fell asleep, — one can hardly call such peaceful ends dying, — and Artemesia found herself quite alone.

"'T was now I knew her first, — a dainty little lady, somewhat prim in all her ways, and whether consciously or not, growing each year more and more like the artemesias which grew so plentifully in her garden, their pale colourings repeated in her gowns of mauve or grey, with the delicate laces which she always wore, and which were not unlike the rime of hoar-frost which often lay on the garden blossoms.

"Perhaps you do not remember your uncle, certainly not as he was when we first came here to live. Handsome, vivid, full of life and mer-

Canary Bird

riment, his whole nature was in direct contrast to the shaded grey of the little lady of the garden.

"He went there, yes, as he went everywhere else in the village, and no one guessed her secret, least of all Harry himself.

"Then came that direful day when Sumter was fired on, and your Uncle Harry was one of the first to leave the town. We little dreamed that he, the incarnation of life and vigour, would never come back. Still less did we dream that to Miss Artemesia his departure had meant so much.

"We had seen her, those dreadful days, going about as usual, and bound up in our own cares, hardly noted her gradual fading away.

"At last one day she sent for me — to bid me good-bye, she said, and when the truth came home to me, it was she who dried my tears.

"'Dear sister,' said she, "'do not weep for me, for truly I am like my own flower. Born late, I loved late, but rejoice with me that I do not linger late.'

"Her prophecy was too true, for she, too, like her father and mother, fell softly asleep, and I gathered the last artemesias in the garden to lay upon her grave."

"Oh, mother," cried an eager young voice, "is that why you always will have those dull artemesias growing in the garden?"

"Yes, dear, and I hope now you will have a little more patience with them, for the sake of Miss Artemesia."

We are apt to associate this flower with cold, dull weather, flying leaves, and bare branches, yet it is also a native of Africa, where there are many legends connected with it, particularly with the plant which bears

Rosy Morn

small white blossoms. One of these concerns a Moorish maiden, Zara, whose lover was a warrior, chief of a wandering tribe. On one of his absences she dreamed that she saw him lying dead in the desert, with a spear through his heart.

The figures in the dream seemed so vivid that she sprang from her couch with a scream, and listening, heard the sound of a horse's hoofs beneath her window. In a moment she had run to the casement and thrown it open, hoping to find her dream untrue; but it was upon no living horse and rider that her terrified eyes rested, for so shadowy and evanescent were they that the moonlight shone directly through them. She called her lover's name several times, each time with less courage, and then as the ghostly figure turned, revealing the spear in his heart, she fainted and fell from her

window upon a bank of red chrysanthemums which grew beneath it. The flowers paled slowly from red to white with grief at seeing her die, and so they remain to this day. When crushed they exhale a faint, sweet odour, an emblem of the love that never dies.

Few of our poets have had the courage to extol this flower in verse; no doubt its name of many syllables has daunted them.

In the old annuals, or "Friendship's Offerings," which were so highly esteemed by our grandmothers, one will always find a section of the book devoted to the explanation of the language of flowers. The sentiment bestowed upon our golden flower is one of the prettiest that may be found; it reads, "Courage under adversity."

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